

# Valley Christian Church

## Fourth Sunday of Easter

May 3, 2020

### PRELUDE

### CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: The Good Shepherd calls us, we are His sheep.  
People: We hear His voice and know Him.  
Leader: He invites us to drink from the quiet pools.  
People: We are thirsty for the living water.  
Leader: He calls us to green meadows in which to feed.  
People: We hunger for the good things of God.  
Leader: Most of all, the Good Shepherd calls us to follow him.  
People: With joy and thanksgiving we follow our Good Shepherd.

### HYMN

*"All the Way My Savior Leads Me"*

*All the way my Savior leads me;  
What have I to ask beside?  
Can I doubt His tender mercy,  
Who through life has been my Guide?  
Heav'nly peace, divinest comfort,  
Here by faith in Him to dwell!  
For I know, whate'er befall me,  
Jesus doeth all things well,  
For I know, whate'er befall me,  
Jesus doeth all things well.*

*All the way my Savior leads me,  
Cheers each winding path I tread,  
Gives me grace for every trial,  
Feeds me with the living bread.  
Though my weary steps may falter,  
And my soul athirst may be,  
Gushing from the Rock before me,  
Lo! a spring of joy I see,  
Gushing from the Rock before me,  
Lo! a spring of joy I see.*

### INVOCATION

Come to us, our Good Shepherd, and guide us to a new week of life. Feed us and refresh us that we may be

ready for the journey into this week as we follow you wherever you lead us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

### SCRIPTURE

*John 10:11-14 Luke 15:3-7*

### MEDITATION

*"I am the Good Shepherd"*  
See Insert for Meditation

### HYMN

*"God is My Shepherd"*

*God is my shepherd, I'll not want,  
I feed in pastures green.  
God grants me rest and bids me drink  
from waters calm and clean.  
Through daily tasks, I'm blessed and led  
by one I have not one seen.  
Goodness and mercy all my days  
will surely follow me;  
and where God reigns in heaven and earth,  
my dwelling place will be.  
My shepherd blesses, cares, and leads  
through all eternity.*

### SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS

### PASTORAL PRAYER

Most merciful and gracious God, we thank you for calling us together this day to be the church. By teleconference, we offer you our praise and worship during this service as we hear the voices of our friends over the phone, may be reconnect with them. And as we seek your voice in word and song, may we reconnect with you.  
We thank you for all of the blessings you have shared with Valley Christian Church. We thank you for the Holy Spirit who gives us energy to serve. We thank you for all the different ministries of this church that alleviate suffering and brings your love to the world. We all have many needs, O God. We need your healing in our lives, and in the lives of those we love. We need reassurance for our doubts. We need insight for our deepest questions. We bring these concerns to you because you are a loving God.  
We also pray for those beyond our own circle of friends and family. We pray for all those who suffer in the world. We pray especially today for those in despair over the Coronavirus. Grant them your strength and

grace. Draw them toward the hope only you can offer. Hope keeps us all going, so we ask for hope in abundance. In the Name of the Good Shepherd, Jesus, Amen.

## CALL TO COMMUNION

As we come to your table in our homes today, we bring our thanks that you have loved us. We bring with us needs for healing and wholeness, for others and for ourselves. We bring with us the desire to live as messengers of Good News for the world.

## COMMUNION HYMN

*"I'm Gonna Eat at the Welcome Table"*

*I'm gonna eat at the welcome table,*

*I'm going to eat at the welcome table, Allelu.*

*I'm gonna eat at the welcome table,*

*I'm gonna eat at the welcome table, Allelu.*

*I'm gonna eat and drink with my Jesus,*

*I'm gonna eat and drink with my Jesus, Allelu.*

*I'm gonna eat and drink with my Jesus,*

*I'm gonna eat and drink with my Jesus, Allelu.*

## COMMUNION PRAYER

Pray together the Lord's Prayer

## HOLY COMMUNION

Partake of the holy communion

(Bread, juice or whatever is available to you)

## WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Hear the words of Jesus when he said, "Take eat and take drink."

## SHARING OUR OFFERING WITH GOD

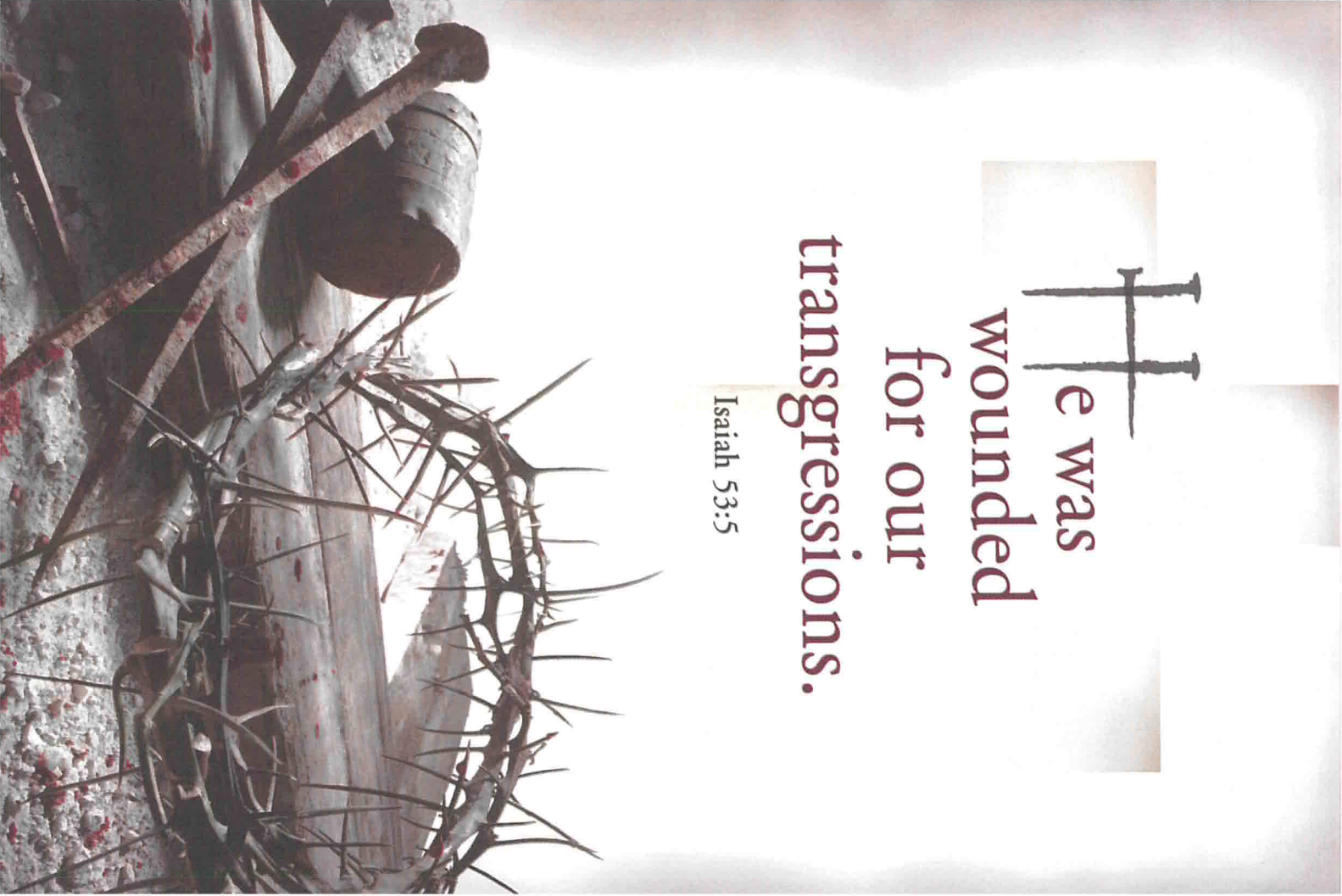
Share your church offering with the church by mail. Thank you for your love gifts.

## OFFERTORY PRAYER

In this beautiful season of spring in Alabama, the birds of the air offer to you their songs, and the flowers in our yards offer you their blooms. Receive our gifts offered with praise and thanksgiving so that your faithful love may be proclaimed throughout the world. Amen.

## BENEDICTION

We have worshipped the Good Shepherd. Now He goes into the world to feed His sheep with His love. He calls us to follow Him. Go now with the Good Shepherd, and be a witness of God to those around you. Amen



He was  
wounded  
for our  
transgressions.

Isaiah 53:5



## MEDITATION

Sunday, May 3, 2020

“I am the Good Shepherd!”

Jesus said, “I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for His sheep.” In this statement Jesus describes you and I as His sheep. In fact, both the old and new testaments call us sheep.

In Psalm 23 we read the words, “The Lord is my Shepherd and we are the sheep of His pasture.” Isaiah proclaimed, “All like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way.” (Isaiah 53.6)

In His words today of being our Good Shepherd, Jesus was speaking of the attacks which come to the sheep and the protection of which He provides.

If there is a defenseless animal, it is the sheep. A sheep has no weapon with which to fight. It has no speed to run away. If a sheep is to be saved from attacking animals, it will be saved by the strength of the shepherd.

A second enemy which attacked the sheep was the thief. In the days of Jesus, sheep were one of the few things worth stealing. Jesus said that the thief came to steal, kill and destroy. Therefore, it was the shepherd’s work to protect His sheep from thieves, as well as protecting them from wild animals.

Jesus Christ is our Good Shepherd. His protection is not of the body from animals and thieves, but a protection of the soul. Today the world is full of those who attack the soul. Jesus once said, “Do not fear those who can destroy the body, but fear those who can destroy the soul.”

If we allow Christ to be our Good Shepherd, the concerns of pride, apathy and fear will not overwhelm us. The darkness of the world

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will not be successful in destroying us. We are defenseless as sheep and we need the Good Shepherd.

Now the question arises on how does the Good Shepherd work to protect us? First, the Good Shepherd gives us the abundant life. Sheep can never find food for themselves. The shepherd must lead them to green pastures. When we follow Jesus, we find the food which nourishes the soul. We find abundant life. Jesus said, “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” (John 10:10)

Second, Jesus also said that the Good Shepherd gave His life for the sheep. Apparently, it was not uncommon for a shepherd to lose his life in the defense of his sheep. Jesus was the Good Shepherd who gave His life for the sins of the world. In a way, which we will never be able to fully understand, by His death Jesus makes possible our forgiveness, and by His resurrection He opens to us the gates of eternal life.

Finally, in the morning scripture of Luke 15:3-7, we are reminded that when we are lost sheep, the Good Shepherd comes to find us. The Good Shepherd wants all of His sheep to be in the flock, even those who are lost and wander off. He can’t rest until all the sheep are safely accounted for.

May we remember that when lost sheep wander off, the Good Shepherd finds them and rejoices that they are safe. Then the scripture shares that the Shepherd picks up the sheep, places it on his shoulders and carries it home.

The parable in Luke then gives us a picture of Jesus carrying the lost sheep home on his shoulders. And this is the gospel. He is not leading the sheep, or driving him home, He is carrying him. For it is God’s good pleasure not to return people to His kingdom with a whip, as wild animals are driven, nor with a leash as animals are led, but He desires to return lost people to His kingdom carried on the broad shoulders of His love. Praise be to God for sending us the Good Shepherd.

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